

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Alaska Huts Association****Federal Tax ID: 92-0165283****Project Title:****Project Type: New Construction and Land Acquisition**

# Alaska Huts Association - Glacier Discovery Hut-to-Hut System, Phase 1 - Alaska Long Trail

**State Funding Requested: \$690,000****House District: 29 / O**

One-Time Need

**Brief Project Description:**

The Glacier Discovery Project is a linked three hut system along the Alaska Railroad's Whistle Stop corridor in the Kenai Mountains.

Phase 1: build the 22-bed "Lars Spurkland Memorial Hut" overlooking Spencer Glacier.

**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$1,150,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$460,000)
FY2023 State Funding Request:	(\$690,000)
Project Deficit:	\$0

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The Glacier Discovery Project is a linked three hut system along the Alaska Railroad's Whistle Stop corridor in the Kenai Mountains. Phase 1: build the 22-bed "Lars Spurkland Memorial Hut" overlooking Spencer Glacier.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The Glacier Discovery Project is a linked three hut system along the Alaska Railroad's Whistle Stop corridor in the Kenai Mountains. In Phase I of the Glacier Discovery Project, Alaska Huts Association, an Anchorage- based 501(c)3 non-profit, will work in partnership with the Chugach National Forest and Alaska Railroad to build the 22-bed "Lars Spurkland Memorial Hut" overlooking Spencer Glacier. This strategic location will benefit from infrastructure already placed by the US Forest Service and independent tour operators, including whistle stops, shelters, toilet facilities, well established trails, and a fantastic pedestrian bridge across the Placer River.

In Phase II of the Glacier Discovery Project, Alaska Huts will further develop plans to build two 8-10 bed huts, Bartlett Glacier Hut and Trail Glacier Hut, along the Alaska Railroad's Whistle Stop Corridor to complete a three-hut system. Bartlett and Trail Glacier Huts will be accessed via the Glacier Discovery Trail, a 30-mile US Forest Service trail currently under construction. Once complete, the trail will connect the Glacier Discovery Hut system and Spencer Glacier, Grandview and Trail Glacier Whistle Stops.

**BENEFITS AND NEED:**

The Glacier Discovery Project will serve a diverse group of outdoor enthusiasts due to its unique location along the Alaska Railroad corridor. Visitors will be able to travel hut-to-hut by riding the train or by hiking the trail--or a mix of both--creating

options for an exceptionally diverse group of users. By providing simple but key amenities like heat, cooking stoves, and mattresses, the huts will bring thousands of new visitors of varying backcountry experience into the Kenai Mountains from all over the world, while fostering camaraderie, wilderness education and environmental stewardship. Specific benefits:

- Provide access to backcountry to visitors of diverse abilities
- Benefit local outfitter businesses and Alaska Railroad
- Maximize on the appeal of railroad travel, ease of access, and Alaska's beautiful wilderness.
- Create multi-day hut-to-hut trail system

PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS: Alaska Huts Association, USFS and ARR

USE: nonmotorized

ESTIMATED COST:

Phase 1 (Lars Spurkland Memorial Hut):

\$1.15M (\$460,000 secured)

### Project Timeline:

2023-2024

### Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Alaska Huts Association

### Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☒ Yes ☐ No